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dethroned the old fate that was supposed to rule the affairs of men and pointed out the importance of knowledge, for through knowledge we can learn to regulate our fate ourselves. The philosopher who thought little of well-being, of *εἰρήνη*, and demanded above all a well-doing, an *εἰς πράττειν* ("Memorabilia," III, 9, 14, 15.) did not recommend asking soothsayers questions where we should better ask ourselves, although it is probable that he recommended the Athenians to apply to the Delphic oracle instead of relying upon omens not so much because he believed in prophesies, but because he thought that they would be influenced by the authority of this venerable institution whose wisdom and conservative spirit were beyond question, so that good advice could be expected from it. Karl Joël, accordingly, advises us to read the "Memorabilia" with an inversion of the points, viz., to convert the sentences qualified by "although" and "to be sure" into the main sentences and *vice versa*. In this way we shall be able to distinguish between the pagan orthodoxy of Xenophon and the rationalism of Socrates. Why does Xenophon not state directly and simply (1) Socrates advised his friend to ask the oracles in all cases of uncertainty, (2) manticism is indispensable in the economy of a household as well as of a state, and (3) the gods have not granted us any real knowledge as to a final success and reveal it through special revelations. Why must he add long sentences introduced by "although"? He adds to (1) that everybody ought to act solely according to his own conviction, to (2) that all the trades up to the highest professions had to be learned before practiced, and to (3) that those who inquired at the oracles for things which could be learned and studied in the usual way are crazy and even blasphemers.

This sketch may suffice to characterise the book which is much better than could be anticipated after a perusal of the preface, which almost induced us to lay it aside unread. It is not the modesty of the author which produces a prejudice but the random talk concerning things which neither a reader nor a reviewer will care to know. The author has apparently no talent for writing prefaces, and he would be wise to omit them in the future entirely. The book might be very much condensed, repetitions avoided, and an alphabetical index certainly should have been added.

It contains *five hundred and fifty-four* pages; and the author says he is preparing a *second* volume. We think it would have been better for his views if he had expressed them in a pamphlet.

*κριτική.*

A PERPLEXED PHILOSOPHER. Being an examination of Mr. Herbert Spencer's various utterances on the land question, with some incidental reference to his synthetic philosophy. By *Henry George*. New York: Charles L. Webster & Company. 320 pp.

The "Perplexed Philosopher" herein described is Mr. Herbert Spencer, and persons who like ginger in their ale will enjoy this book; for its eloquent invective, hot from the heart, cheers us like that stimulating drink. Because of this fiery and

revengeful attack on Herbert Spencer much dignified reproof has been aimed at Mr. George by those excellent people who religiously forgive the injuries done to others, and allow only to themselves the luxury of retaliation ; but when we consider the provocation given by Mr. Spencer, this counter-blow of Mr. George is mild. Mr. Spencer had a critic's right severely or tenderly to condemn the doctrines of Mr. George ; and had he kept himself within his privilege Mr. George in reply would not have had any right to assail the personal character and motives of Mr. Spencer ; but the older philosopher chose to treat the younger with supercilious disdain, and this was a personal affront that fully justified a retort personal. Scorn is an ignoble argument, lawful only in return for scorn.

Apart from the truth or error they contain, the writings of Mr. George have achieved a phenomenal popularity ; their influence on social opinion has been in some directions almost revolutionary ; they are to-day the political creed of many men in different parts of the world, and especially of many thousands in America, Great Britain, and Australia. They are bold in theories, attractive in illustration, and admirable in their literary form. Their approval of "Social Statics" was an advertisement that multiplied by hundreds the readers of that book, and there is no philosopher great enough to affect ignorance of Mr. George's writings, or to dismiss them with a sneer. More copies of "Progress and Poverty" have been sold than of any other book on social economics that ever has been written, and when Mr. Spencer spoke of that book as "a work which I closed after a few minutes on finding how visionary were its ideas," he put on airs of aggravating superiority which naturally provoked the resentment of Mr. George.

After not reading the book Mr. Spencer condemned its heresies and said :

" There is the movement for land nationalisation pressed by Mr. George and his friends with avowed disregard for the just claims of existing owners. . . .

" And now this doctrine (that society as a whole has an absolute right over the possessions of each member) is being openly proclaimed. Mr. George and his friends, Mr. Hyndman and his friends, are putting their theory to its logical issue."

To that Mr. George replies as follows :

" In nothing I have ever written or spoken is there any justification for such a characterisation. I am not even a land nationalisationist as the English and German and American nationalisationists well know. . . . I have been a staunch denier of the assumption of the right of society to the possessions of each member, and a clearer and more resolute upholder of the rights of property than Mr. Spencer has been."

Without waiting to inquire whether Mr. George includes within the "rights of property" the right to property in land, it is enough to say that here at least Mr. Spencer is at a disadvantage. He disarmed himself before going into battle by refusing to read Mr. George's writings, and scorning to examine them he accused them of communism, confiscation, and land-nationalisation. Mr. Spencer cannot now strike back for he has thrown his weapons away. He is a prisoner in the hands

of Mr. George, who couples him with Parson Wilbur denouncing a print called the *Liberator*, "whose heresies," he said, "I take every opportunity of combating, and of which, I thank God, I have never read a single line." The parallel is well drawn; and the lesson of it is this, never challenge a man and then treat him with contempt; if you think he is not a foeman worthy of your steel, let him alone.

Had Mr. Spencer studied the works of Mr. Henry George, he would have found in them some doctrines having a manifest family likeness to communism, confiscation, and land-nationalisation; but they avail Mr. Spencer nothing, because he would not condescend to read the chapters where those revolutionary principles are. If he would bend his brow a moment and examine them he might find that in this controversy there are two perplexed philosophers instead of one. In the book before us Mr. George remarks:

"It is this confusion of Mr. Spencer as to rent and value that has led him into confusion as to the right of property; and that, at first, at least prevented him from seeing that to secure the equal rights of men to land, *it is not necessary that society should take formal possession of land, and let it out*, and consequently, that the difficulties he anticipated in taking possession of improved land were imaginary."

But, in "Progress and Poverty," Chapter II, he said:

"We should satisfy the law of justice, we should meet all economic requirements, by at one stroke abolishing all private titles, declaring all land public property, and *letting it out to the highest bidders in lots to suit*, under such conditions as would safely guard the right to improvements."

The italics are ours, directing the attention to apparent contradictions which it is for Mr. George to reconcile. And, if English words have any meaning, "abolishing all private titles" means confiscation; and "declaring all land public property and letting it out to the highest bidders," is land-nationalisation; at least, the ordinary reader may innocently think so, yet Mr. George declares that he is not a land-nationalisationist.

As a personal defense and explanation Mr. George has a right to say that he is not a land-nationalisationist, or a communist, or an "ist" of any other kind, and we are bound to take his word for it, but in this dispute that matter is wholly immaterial. The question before the meeting is this, Is Mr. George's book a land-nationalisationist or is it not? Is it a confiscationist or not? In "Progress and Poverty" Mr. George explains his meaning thus:

"I do not propose either to purchase or to confiscate property in land. The first would be unjust, the second needless. Let the individuals who now hold it still retain, if they want to, possession of what they are pleased to call *their* land. Let them continue to call it *their* land. Let them buy and sell and bequeath and devise it. We may safely leave them the shell if we take the kernel. *It is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent.*"

The italics are by Mr. George; and a little farther on, he says:

"That is the first step upon which the practical struggle must be made. When the hare is once caught and killed, cooking him will follow as a matter of course."

And several years afterwards, in "Protection or Free Trade," page 302, Mr. George describes the artful mechanism of the snare by which the hare is to be caught and killed:

"Now it is evident that, in order to take for the use of the government the whole income arising from land just as effectively as it could be taken by formally appropriating and letting out the land, it is only necessary to abolish, one after another, all taxes now levied, and to increase the tax on land values till it reaches as near as may be the full annual value of the land."

In that paragraph "government" is merely another word for "nation," and the taking away from private owners all the lands of the country "for the use of the government" is land-nationalisation, whether the taking be done boldly by imperial decree, or furtively by taxing it up to its "full value" and out of the hands of its owners.

The discrimination above made must apply to Herbert Spencer as well as to Henry George. Mr. Spencer has a right to qualify and explain as much as he pleases; he may properly say what he thinks now about the right of land-ownership, but the question at issue is this, What are the opinions of "Social Statics" upon the land question? Are they not in principle, and very nearly in expression the opinions of "Progress and Poverty"?

It is not to be denied that "Progress and Poverty" found moral support in "Social Statics." In fact, the disciples of Henry George, whenever their doctrines were assailed, brought Herbert Spencer into the field as a reinforcement. This, at last, gave Mr. Spencer great annoyance, and in a moment of irritation he determined even by a qualified recantation to withdraw the reserve brigade on which "Progress and Poverty" had so long depended for assistance. Hence, his letters to the *Times* and the *St. James's Gazette*, and the modification of his views which appears in "Justice." He tried to do this by dropping Mr. George to the ground, while endeavoring to stand on consistent feet himself; and this it is that inspires the vehement criticism of Mr. George.

With a scalpel most logically keen Mr. George has dissected Mr. Spencer's philosophy of land, and with almost Indian exultation he exposes its eccentricities and contradictions. As was inevitable, for we cannot get along without it, the old familiar Galileo moral is brought in by Mr. George to prove that "still it moves." He is right; for if it is ethically and politically true, as declared by Mr. Spencer in 1850, "that equity does not permit property in land," it will be true forever, and no extremity of recantation can make it false. The attempt of Mr. Spencer to show by duplicate metaphysics that his later opinions concerning land are not inconsistent with the occult meaning of "Social Statics," is a failure. It cannot stand a moment before the searching analysis and legible comparisons of Mr. George.

The attempt to resolve a concrete subject, such as government ownership of land, into abstract terms of justice limited or expanded by the right of some private person to the house on the land, and the barn, and the well, and the fences, and the apple-trees, and other appurtenances, corporeal and incorporeal, has involved Mr. George himself, as well as Mr. Spencer, in some confusion of thought, and has entangled both of them in varieties of statement not easy to reconcile. This might be due to obscure definitions and multiplied explanations, or to changes of opinion, but Mr. George asserts that Mr. Spencer's inconsistencies are the result of moral and intellectual dishonesty, prompting him to explain away his principles to propitiate the landlords and other aristocratic persons who admitted him into their high society after he became eminent, and before they knew that his philosophy denied the right of private property in land.

In his letter to the *Times*, apologising for "Social Statics," Mr. Spencer said :

"The work referred to—"Social Statics"—was intended to be a system of "Political Ethics—absolute political ethics, or that which ought to be, as distinguished from relative political ethics, or that which is at present the nearest practical approach to it."

And then the philosopher becomes a politician and frames for the landed and the landless a moral code, ambidextrous and elastic as a party platform. Duty, justice, right, and truth, lose all their absolute qualities, and become relative to expediency and our own convenience. He teaches us to oppose wrongs until they become vested rights and then defend them. He makes ethics changeable as our coats, and the man who can afford two suits of clothes may have two suits of ethics, an "absolute" suit for Sundays and a "relative" suit for every day; an "abstract" suit for wearing about the house, and a "practical" suit for business purposes. He may wear a suit of "pure" ethics when buying, and a suit of "applied" ethics when selling; and so, at last, by those harlequin morals, it happens that what we ought to do has no relation at all to "that which ought to be." Those pure subtleties and applied subterfuges make Mr. Spencer an easy mark for the indignant sarcasm of Mr. George, who shows what Mr. Spencer thought of absolute and relative ethics when he said in "Social Statics":

"When a man admits that an act is 'theoretically just,' he admits it to be "that which, in strict duty, should be done. By 'true to principle' he means in "harmony with the conduct decreed for us. The course which he calls 'abstractedly 'right,' he believes to be the appointed way to human happiness. There is no "escape. The expressions mean this or they mean nothing."

The book is written in an angry vein, and the nicknames "traitor," "juggler," "apostate," and the like, add nothing to the value of its argument; they only give bitterness to the censure. They are not to be commended, although they ought to be excused, for they sprang out of "a tempest of provocation." Mr. George has been fighting under the banner of Herbert Spencer, and he feels like a soldier whose general deserts him in the battle and then disowns him altogether.

The only rational explanation of Mr. Spencer's letters to the *Times* and the *St. James's Gazette* is that he has radically changed his opinions about the private ownership of land ; and his timid, uncertain, and equivocal way of saying so makes him look very much like the "perplexed philosopher" that Mr. George describes. At the same time it must be noticed that Mr. George himself is not so radical in this last book as he was in "Progress and Poverty." His principles appear to be the same, but in the application of remedies he is milder than he was about fourteen years ago. When he reaches Mr. Spencer's age he may be just as conservative and "perplexed" as that philosopher is now.

M. M. TRUMBULL.